USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

FORWARD MILITARY PRESENCE: A MATTER OF STRATEGIC CULTURE

by

Lieutenant Colonel Steven L. Basham
United States Air Force

Colonel Lee DeRemer
Project Adviser

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED
30 MAR 2007	**Strategy Research Project**	**00-00-2006 to 00-00-2007**

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
Forward Military Presence A Matter of Strategic Culture	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
Steven Basham	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
U.S. Army War College,Carlisle Barracks,Carlisle,PA,17013-5050	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
See attached.

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			
unclassified	**unclassified**	**unclassified**	**Same as Report (SAR)**	**22**	

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Steven L. Basham

TITLE: Forward Military Presence: A Matter of Strategic Culture

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 28 March 2007 WORD COUNT: 5912 PAGES: 22

KEY TERMS: Overseas, Behavior, National Security Policy, Organizational

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Since the end of World War II, the United States has maintained a significant forward military presence throughout the world. The research within this paper offers for consideration the possibility that United States policy toward forward military presence is guided by a developing strategic culture based upon an underlying assumption that forward military presence is an essential means for maintaining international influence and leverage in order to ensure U.S. security. This theorizes that forward military presence is more than just interest driven to; rather it is driven by a cultural aspect. The research provides a look at how strategic culture guides strategic behavior and may limit debate over potential options to forward presence. The research includes an overview of United States global military presence since World War II, a discussion of strategic culture, U.S. national security policy decisions that led to U.S. forward military presence, analysis of this U.S. policy as it relates to strategic culture and some considerations for future decisions regarding U.S. forward military presence.

FORWARD MILITARY PRESENCE: A MATTER OF STRATEGIC CULTURE

> If the United States were to withdraw from its international commitments, relinquish its diplomatic leadership, or relinquish its military superiority, the world would become an even more dangerous place …
>
> —William S. Cohen[1]

Maintaining a significant military presence throughout the world is a key component of United States national security policy. In the immediate years following World War II, forward military presence was largely a product of post-war re-construction of Europe and Asia, but began to decrease in the late 1940s with post-war demobilization. The threat of Soviet Union and communist ideological expansion provided the rationale for increased U.S. forward military presence beginning in 1950, which endured throughout the Cold War. As the end of the Cold War neared, a new justification for the United States to maintain a substantial forward military presence started to emerge. Continued forward presence was needed to ensure a stable and secure world in which political and economic freedom, human rights and democratic institutions could flourish, while protected from aggression, coercion, insurgencies, subversion, terrorism and illicit drug trafficking.[2] In addition, commitment to a changing North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) mission, unrest in the Balkans, continuing tensions on the Korean Peninsula, China's growing military, ensuring stability in the Middle East and Southwest Asia against regional threats such as Iraq and Iran, and the attacks of the U.S. in September of 2001, all added to the need for maintaining a sizable forward presence.

The research within this paper examines U.S. forward military presence from an organizational perspective. The author offers for consideration the possibility that United States policies advocating forward military presence are guided by a developing strategic culture based upon an underlying assumption, or belief, that forward military presence is an essential means for maintaining international influence and leverage in order to ensure U.S. security. On the surface, this seems rather obvious. However, a more in-depth view of forward presence as an object of a greater strategic culture raises potential issues for U.S. policy decisions pertaining to future forward presence. Rather than being purely interest driven, there may be a cultural aspect that guides strategic decision-making regarding forward military presence. If so, this strategic culture could influence the behavior of U.S. policy makers when the debate over continued forward presence or pursuit of alternatives to forward presence occurs.

The first section of this paper provides a brief overview of how United States forward military presence has fluctuated since World War II. The second section provides a foundation

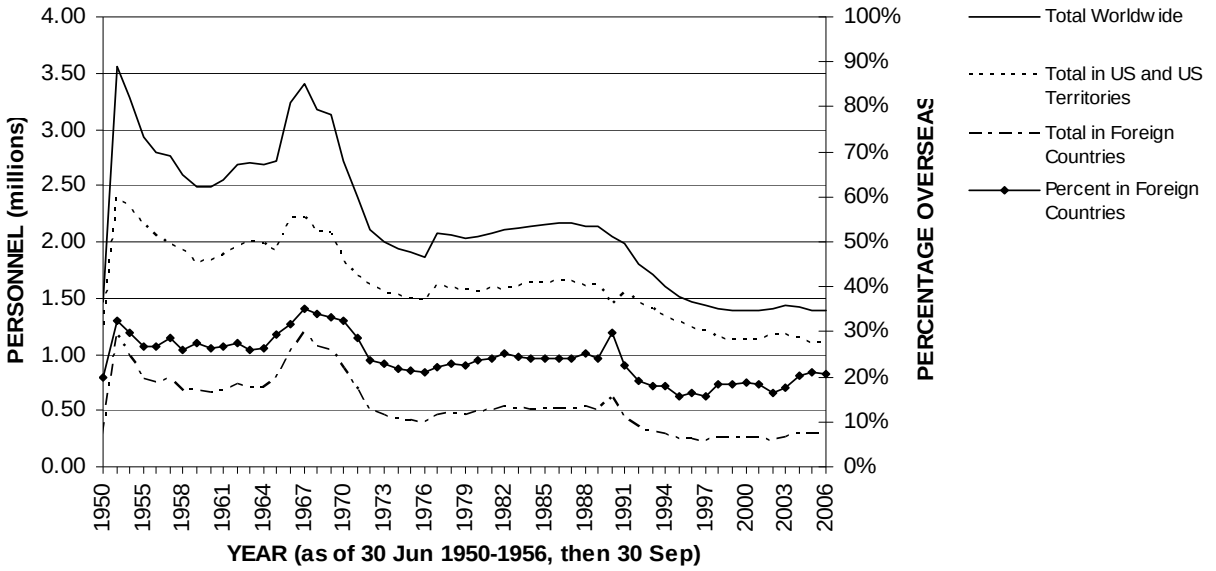
for current views on organizational culture and strategic culture. In the third section, the author analyzes the basis for forward military presence by reviewing U.S. national security policies. The final section provides an analysis of how policy advocating forward presence could be a product of U.S. strategic culture and offers some considerations for debating future forward presence in light of cultural influence on strategic behavior.

United States Forward Military Presence since World War II

At the end of World War II, the United States military started a rapid demobilization of its armed forces while maintaining substantial numbers in Europe and Asia. By June 1947, the Army decreased its 8 million-man army to 684,000 ground troops and 306,000 airmen. The Navy reduced its strength to 484,000, while the Marine Corps dropped to 92,000. By 1950, the Army was down to 591,000, almost two-thirds of its December 7, 1941 strength of 1,643,477. The newly formed Air Force increased its number of airmen to 411,000, while the Navy and Marine Corps end-strength decreased to 377,000 and 75,000 respectively. Throughout the demobilization, approximately half of the Army remained overseas with the bulk occupying Germany and Japan, while a sizable force was in newly liberated Korea.[3] When North Korea crossed the 38th parallel into South Korea on June 24th, 1950, the United States had a forward presence of approximately 292,000 military personnel either on land or at sea. This was the lowest forward military presence the U.S. would experience for the next 44 years.[4]

From 1950 to the 1990s, the containment of Communism and Soviet Union expansion, or the Cold War, was the overarching reason for the United States maintaining a large forward military presence. The U.S. military world-wide total force went from 1.46 million on June 30, 1950, to 3.5 million, with 1.15 million overseas by June, 1953 (see Table 1). At the height of the Cold War, U.S. forces in Europe were approximately 325 thousand stationed primarily in Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom.[5] The forces in Asia were primarily in Japan and Korea, averaging 90 to 100 thousand. During the Vietnam War, the U.S. forces in Southeast and East Asia region swelled to over 700 thousand.[6] Although Europe and East/Southeast Asia are most often associated with the containment of Communism, the U.S. also had a presence in Southwest Asia and Northern Africa.

For much of the Cold War, the U.S. maintained a forward presence in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iran and Libya, to name a few. In 1943, King Abdul Aziz granted the U.S. rights to build an air base in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. The U.S. remained at Dhahran until 1962 using the base as an important Strategic Air Command (SAC) base. Growing nationalist concerns eventually led the Saudi government to not renew the United States' lease.[7] In addition, the



(Compiled from Department of Defense Military Historical Reports on Active Duty Military Personnel by Regional Area and by Country accessed from http://siadapp.dior.whs.mil/personnel/MILITARY/ history/ 309hist.htm on 22 February 2007.)

Table 1. DOD Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths

U.S. Navy started visiting ports in Saudi Arabia in 1948 and began using port facilities in Bahrain in 1949.[8] Bahrain is now home to NAVCENT, the naval component of U.S. Central Command and Fifth Fleet.[9] In 1954, Libya agreed to give basing rights to the U.S. at Wheelus Air Base, near Tripoli in exchange for economic aid. Wheelus became a key base during the Cold War and eventually became one of the largest SAC bases outside of the continental United States.[10] U.S. forces remained at Wheelus until 1969 when the base was evacuated after Muhammar Qadhafi took power in Libya, which coincided with the expiration of the U.S. lease of Wheelus.[11] Finally, the U.S. was in Iran, which provided key intelligence facilities, until the U.S. lost access following the Iranian revolution in 1978-79.[12]

Following the reunification of Germany, the fall of the Soviet Union and the expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait in 1991, the total U.S. military force started to decline as did the ratio of overseas presence to total active force. The United States forward presence remained approximately one-fourth of its total force from 1953 until the end of the Cold War, except during the Vietnam War (see Table 1). After 1991 and for most of the 90's, the number of personnel stationed overseas remained below 20 percent of the total force with decreases in Europe, Northeast Asia and Southwest Asia.[13] However, this was short lived.

Following the attacks by Al-Qaeda on the United States on September 11, 2001, the United States pursued increased access to the Southwest Asia region for the coming war

against the terrorist organization and later for the ousting of Saddam Hussein's regime from Iraq. Pakistan provided air bases for use against targets in Afghanistan as did the former Soviet republics of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Although relations between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia were starting to strain, Saudi Arabia also provided areas from which to launch operations. Once access to Afghanistan was obtained, the United States moved their air bases into Afghanistan.[14] Operations in Iraq, which started in 2003, significantly increased the overseas numbers in Southwest Asia. Although the permanently assigned overseas personnel remained just over 20 percent, the actual overseas percentage when taking into account military personnel deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom increased to over 30 percent (see Table 2). This brings the actual U.S. forward presence to almost one in three, a ratio not experienced since Vietnam.[15]

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total Worldwide	1,385,116	1,411,634	1,434,377	1,426,836	1,389,394	1,384,967
Total US/US Territories	1,130,328	1,181,150	1,181,613	1,139,034	1,098,397	1,100,000
Total in Foreign Countries	254,788	230,484	252,764	287,802	290,997	284,967
% in Foreign Countries	18%	16%	18%	20%	21%	21%
OIF/OEF Deployed*			183,002	170,647	212,100	207,000
Total Overseas with OIF/OEF			435766	458449	503097	491967
Percent with OIF/OEF			30%	32%	36%	36%

Note: Data as of 30 September in each year.
* OIF/OEF personnel are included in the number for their permanent duty location, which may be overseas.
(Compiled from DOD Military Historical Reports on Active Duty Military Personnel accessed from http://siadapp.dior.whs.mil/personnel/MILITARY/history/309hist.htm on 22 February 2007.)

Table 2. DOD Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths

Even though stability in Iraq is a cause for U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf region, continued presence is expected due to U.S. security arrangements with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. The GCC states tend to have problems developing multi-lateral agreements on security among member states but seem more open to bi-lateral agreements with outside sources such as the United States.[16] Although the future stability of Iraq is a concern for the GCC states, Iran also poses a serious regional concern. In 1992, the United States and Qatar concluded a Defense Cooperation Agreement that provided for U.S. access to Qatari bases, pre-positioning of U.S. materiel and combined military exercises.[17] Oman established defense relations with the U.S. following the Iranian revolution in 1979. The U.S. used Oman's air base to launch failed attempts to rescue U.S. embassy hostages in Iran. Under current access agreements, the U.S. can use Oman airfields in Muscat, Thumrait and Masirah Island in addition to the pre-positioning of bombs and other weapons.[18] In 1994, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced a defense pact with the United States. The UAE assisted the U.S. between 1991-2003 in containing Iraq primarily through pre-positioning of

equipment and hosting U.S. refueling aircraft. Although publicly opposed to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the UAE hosted additional U.S. force for the operation.[19] Finally, at any given time, there are about 90,000 U.S. troops in Kuwait, waiting to deploy into Iraq, and about 20,000 permanently based in Kuwait.[20]

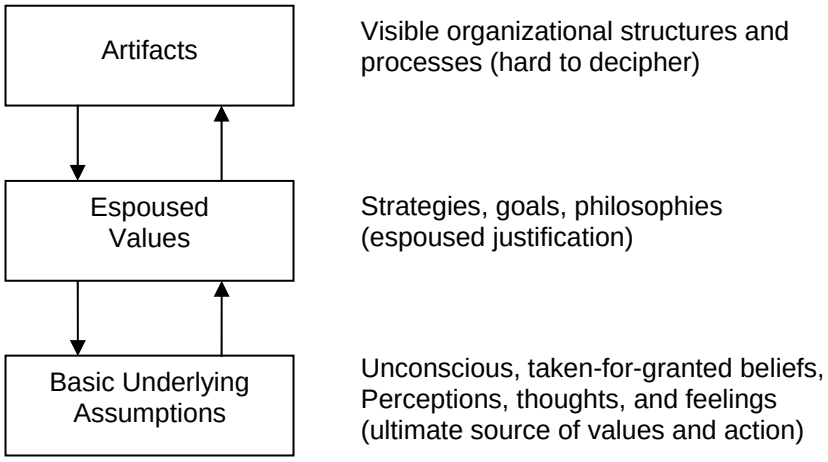
As stated earlier, it may seem obvious that a large forward presence is essential to maintaining influence in international and regional stability in order to promote U.S. security. However, the purpose of this research is to consider whether there might be a cultural aspect that influences U.S. policy decisions toward forward military presence. The next section discusses the concept of strategic culture and sets the framework for further analysis.

Strategic Culture

It is important to understand the basics of organizational culture before turning to a discussion of strategic culture. Edgar H. Schein, widely acclaimed as one of the founders of organizational psychology, defined the culture of an organization as "A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."[21] Prior to his definition, Schein makes it clear that when he uses the term "group" in his definition, he is referring to social units of all sizes, including organizations.

Schein offers that cultures manifest themselves along three different levels ranging from artifacts, to values, to underlying assumptions (see Figure 1). Artifacts are the aspects of a culture that one "sees, hears, and feels when encountering a new organization" and are easy to observe, but sometimes hard to decipher. Espoused values are those values put forth by leadership in an organization that become embodied in the organizational philosophy, which can serve as "a guide and as a way of dealing with uncertainty of intrinsically uncontrollable or difficult events." Finally, basic underlying assumptions, which Schein defines as the "essence of culture," are such strongly held beliefs in a group that members will find behavior inconsistent with these basic assumptions inconceivable. As such, basic assumptions, or deeply held beliefs, are rarely confronted and hence extremely difficult to change.[22]

According to Schein, culture as a set of basic assumptions defines what individuals, or organizations, pay attention to, how they interpret the external environment and how they react in emotional situations. Humans desire cognitive stability. Reexamining basic assumptions temporarily destabilizes the human cognitive and interpersonal world, creating large amounts of anxiety. Therefore, rather than tolerating the anxiety levels associated with challenging basic



(Reproduced from Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc, 1992), 17.)

Figure 1. Levels of Culture

assumptions, even if it means "distorting, denying, projecting, or in other ways falsifying" what may be going on around the organization, individuals tend to perceive the events around them as congruent with assumptions. Of course, the concern is that others outside the organization, who do not share or understand the same basic assumptions, may misinterpret actions of the organization.[23] Therefore, the key to correct interpretation of the actions of an organization is to understand the basic assumptions that form the foundation for the cultural behavior.

The notion of strategic culture is relatively new and still stimulates much debate as to its utility. Writings on strategic culture started in the 1980s with noted writers such as Jack Snyder and Colin Gray, as they compared Soviet and U.S. nuclear strategies. It appears the initial goal of the earlier writers on strategic culture was to bring the discussion of culture back into the debate over policy formulation by speculating how a cultural "mind-set" might influence strategic decision-making.[24] The intent was not to develop a new theory for decision-making, although subsequent writers expanded on this possibility.

In a RAND study of Soviet strategic culture, Jack Snyder defined strategic culture as "the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other" with regard to strategy development.[25] He assessed that strategic cultures maintain a large degree of continuity unless objective conditions cause a change. Likewise, he discussed the premise that there are bodies of attitudes and beliefs that guide and circumscribe thought on strategic issues and frame how strategic issues are formulated for debate.[26]

Colin S. Gray added to the study of strategic culture and its importance by raising the question of the "roots and influences" of strategic culture on strategic behavior. He writes how early theorists of strategic culture hypothesized that different security communities tend to exhibit in stated thought and behavior patterns that could be termed cultural, which in turn became patterns for distinctive strategic behavior within those communities. Like Snyder, Gray assessed that strategic culture can change over time but would do so very slowly.[27] However, without clear understanding of history and new historical experiences, decision-makers might fall back upon strategic culture to guide strategic behavior although a historically altered response might be more appropriate.[28] This relates back to Schein's statement that individuals, and therefore organizations, desire cognitive stability. Strategic culture, which includes the assumptions that underlie strategic behavior, must make sense to the human agents and client organizations.[29] Gray asserts that "strategically [encultured] people" will behave in ways influenced by their pattern of assumptions and although strategic culture need not dictate a particular course of action, the effects of strategic culture will be strongly stamped upon strategic behavior.[30]

In 1995, Alastair Iain Johnston elevated the discussion of strategic culture influencing strategic behavior to the theoretical level. He defines strategic culture as "an integrated system of symbols (e.g., argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors) which acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious." This definition comprises two parts: the first consists of basic assumptions about the orderliness of the strategic environment, about the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses, and the efficacy of the use of force; the second part deals with the strategic choices that are made available and most effective for dealing with a threat.[31]

Unlike other writers, Johnston offers a method of analysis for the potential existence of strategic preferences emanating from a strategic culture by observing objects of the culture. Johnston's method involves choosing objects or artifacts such as policy documents from the period under study and comparing them with samples from a past period. If there is congruence in preference rankings, one might ascertain that a strategic culture exists and has persisted across this historical time.[32] From a "system of symbols" perspective, strategic culture may be "reflected by symbols about the role of force in human affairs, about the efficacy of certain strategies, and hence about what strategies are better than others." The symbols act as mental guides to help decision-makers to respond in complex environments.[33] This relates Johnston

back to Schein. By observing artifacts, or objects as Johnston uses, and espoused values, one can determine the possible presence of some basic underlying assumptions or beliefs that support a particular culture, which affects how an organization interprets the external environment and responds in complex or emotional situations.

The next section sets the stage for analysis of the existence of a strategic culture within the United States by observing national security strategy policies and the preference for continued forward presence throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War periods.

United States National Security Strategy and Forward Military Presence

In the Truman Doctrine, President Harry Truman enunciated the containment policy, which some think was an inevitable extension of the Monroe Doctrine on a global scale. The policy reversed the United States' long-standing isolationist stance toward Europe and other parts of the world. Much like the Monroe Doctrine focused on European political encroachment into the Americas, the Truman Doctrine focused on Soviet Union encroachment. As stated by President Truman, the U.S. was now an "internationalist" or "globalist" state that would "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."[34]

The actual national security strategy pertaining to the Soviet Union and the execution of the Cold War was enunciated in NSC-68, a classified document that served as the framework for much of the security policy throughout the Cold War.[35] Although the containment of Soviet expansion is popularly thought of as the main reason for the national security directive, the U.S. policy of developing a healthy international community was a primary objective despite the Soviet threat. As stated in the document, the actual intention of NSC-68 was to foster a world in which the American system could survive and flourish. Any thoughts of isolation should be dismissed.[36] However, the threat of Soviet expansion provided a common enemy for the U.S. leadership to rally support for the policy. As early as 1946, there was such overwhelming support for containing communist expansion from the Soviet Union that 80 percent of the U.S. public opposed the withdrawal of American forces from Europe.[37]

Emily S. Rosenberg, a PHD and writer on U.S. cultural expansion, wrote of the cultural relevance of NSC-68. NSC-68 was an instrument to tie the future of the United States to the historical past stemming from the Constitution by providing that the fundamental purpose of the U.S. is "to assure the integrity and vitality of our free society, which is founded upon the dignity and worth of the individual." The nation had a new enemy capable of unbelievable acts, which necessitated pursuing international goals.[38]

NSC-68 paved the way for the massive build-up of U.S. military overseas that was to occur over several years; North Korea's invasion of the South put the plan into action much quicker. The plan called for four potential courses of action: 1) continuation of current policies and programs, 2) isolation, 3) war, and 4) a rapid build-up of political, economic and military strength in the free world. President Truman initially delayed making a decision on NSC-68. However, when North Korean Communists invaded South Korea, the threat posed in NSC-68 became more credible and garnered more support for the fourth option.[39] The direction for a more expedient build-up was described in NSC-68/4 in December, 1950. The plan established guidance for foreign military and economic assistance to NATO defense plans, as well as assistance to Eastern Europe and the Middle East, specifically Greece, Turkey and Iran, and Southeast Asian nations such as Indochina, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Formosa.[40] The U.S. military overseas build-up and establishment of forward presence was under way and would remain so until the end of the Cold War with a few variances by subsequent doctrines.

In 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower's administration put forth NSC-162/2 in an effort to alter the open-ended aspect of NSC-68 by adding emphasis for greater burden sharing by allies. NSC-162/2 placed emphasis on a strong strategic military posture, with the capability of inflicting massive retaliatory damage by Strategic Air Command aircraft in the event of an outbreak of war, while maintaining sufficient U.S. and allied forces in readiness to move rapidly to counter initial Soviet aggression.[41] The goal was to ease some of the burden on the already stretched U.S. economy and strained military. However, this effort was not to initially decrease U.S. forward presence. As stated in NSC-162/2, "Under present conditions, however, any major withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe or the Far East would be interpreted as a diminution of U.S. interest in the defense of these areas and would seriously undermine the strength and cohesion of the coalition."[42] Therefore, U.S. forward presence remained above 25 percent of the total force until after the Vietnam War.

President John F. Kennedy's strategy of Flexible Response, which Lyndon B. Johnson inherited, renounced the Eisenhower strategy of Massive Retaliation and focused on avoiding any war, if possible. Atomic retaliatory force was seen as having limitations because the only conceivable use of nuclear weapons would be for national survival. This brought about the concept of limited war with conventional forces and the option to use tactical nuclear weapons, if needed for national interests. The outcome of this was a continued build-up for limited-war and counter-attrition forces to offset the Soviet ground forces.[43] In 1964, the Tonkin Gulf Resolution extended the U.S. protection against Communist aggression to Southeast Asia, which led to a

substantial increase in overseas personnel through 1968, primarily in Southeast Asia. However, from 1968 until the late 70's, the number of personnel deployed overseas slowly decreased.[44]

The Nixon Doctrine attempted to take lessons from the Vietnam War and reduce U.S. overseas commitments to only those that were more effectively retained at a lower cost. This new doctrine would call on nations directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility for providing manpower for its defense with assistance from the U.S., if asked. In short, the defense of other countries would have to be a collective responsibility between the U.S. and its allies. If this doctrine had taken hold, as did the Truman Doctrine, a substantial decrease in overseas forces could possibly have occurred. However, Nixon's demise following Watergate left little enthusiasm for a continued preference for his policies.[45]

Just over twenty years following the Eisenhower Doctrine, President Jimmy Carter reinforced the United States' presence in the Middle East. Although his stated policy was to defend the Persian Gulf against any outside force, it was understood that this was an extension of containing Communism on a regional basis.[46] Following the Iranian revolution in 1978-79, the U.S. lost access to Iran. Shortly after and following other events in the region, President Jimmy Carter enunciated the Carter Doctrine, which stated that any attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region would be regarded as an assault on the vital interests on the United States.[47]

In his 1982 National Security Strategy (NSS), President Ronald Reagan outlined the objectives of security for the U.S. along much the same lines as NSC-68, although more aggressively. The NSS stated that global objectives were targeted against the Soviet Union, but were equally focused on strengthening U.S. influence throughout the world and ensuring U.S. access to foreign markets, energy and mineral resources, in cooperation with existing allies.[48] The NSS clarified that forward deployed forces are maintained to: first, honor U.S. commitments to allies and second, to contain and reverse expansion of Soviet influence worldwide.[49] This was the beginning of a shift away from a purely containment mission.

Although focus remained on defeating the Soviet Union, President Reagan articulated in his last few national security strategies the belief that national interests emanated from enduring values, which necessitated forward presence. National interests, as stated in the 1987 NSS, were security of the U.S. as an independent nation, economic growth, promotion of democracy throughout the world with free and open market economies, a secure world free of major threats and a healthy and vigorous U.S. alliance relationship.[50] The emphasis for forward presence was placed on a strategy of forward defense and alliance solidarity. Therefore, it was consistent with this strategy to maintain a large, forward deployed force in order to deter aggression.[51] In

his final NSS, President Reagan emphasized that the United States' strategy from year to year would change little due to objectives and interests derived from enduring values.[52]

In the three national security strategy documents provided during President George H. W. Bush' tenure, the policy surrounding forward presence continued as a means for achieving national objectives articulated by the previous administration. Overseas bases served as an integral part of alliances and fostered cooperation against common threats. The 1990 NSS again emphasized that the composition of the forward presence will change as threats change, technology improves and allies assume greater responsibility for their security, but forward presence would remain a critical part of the nation's defense posture for the foreseeable future.[53] This proved true when the U.S. returned to the Gulf Region in 1990 following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. After coalition forces expelled Iraq from Kuwait, the United States remained in Saudi Arabia to help protect against a still defiant Saddam Hussein and the threat he posed to the region.[54]

President William J. Clinton's Engagement and Enlargement policy defined the national objectives in the NSS as enhancing national security, promoting prosperity and democracy. President Clinton provided that overseas forces must be in key regions to demonstrate commitment to allies and friends, underwrite regional stability, gain familiarity with overseas operating environments, promote combined training and provide timely initial response capabilities.[55] An addition to President Clinton's Engagement and Enlargement policy proposed an allowance for the United States to use its position of trust to prevent the development of power vacuums in order to ensure regional stability. The U.S. military would promote an international security environment of trust, cooperation, peace and stability, for developing democracies and free-market economies that would in turn ensure America's own economic well-being and security.[56] Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, followed the NSS with a comprehensive "Bottom-Up Review" of the nation's defense strategy, force structure, modernization, infrastructure and foundation that credited military presence with giving stronger influence to political, economic and military affairs in key regions while ensuring access to the facilities and bases the U.S. would need during conflict or contingencies.[57]

In President George W. Bush's first NSS, he states plainly that the forward presence of American forces overseas is "one of the most profound symbols of the U.S. commitments to allies and friends." He goes on to say that to meet the security challenges that the nation faces, the United States will require bases within and beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia.[58] In the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld describes America's security role as unique in that it provides the "basis for a network of

alliances and friendships," as well as "a general sense of stability and confidence." He adds the peacetime mission of security cooperation as an important link between the Department of Defense's strategic direction and those of U.S. allies and friends.[59] Finally, the 2001 QDR offers a glimpse into the reorienting of the U.S. global forces by adding additional bases beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia, providing temporary access to foreign countries for training, redistributing forces for regional deterrence and increasing U.S. access to areas that might otherwise be non-permissive.[60]

The most recent NSS and QDR barely mention overseas presence, a stark break from past documents. In fact, the March 2006 NSS does not mention overseas presence or forward presence. The 2006 QDR only mentions the Global Posture Review with no additional discussion of overseas or forward presence.[61] It's as if it is now an accepted and understood means to national security.

Analysis and Considerations

From President Truman on, each subsequent administration confronted an increasingly complex environment upon which to base the preference for forward presence. Eisenhower looked to airpower technology to ease some of the burden but still found the risks too high to reduce forward presence. The policies of Kennedy and Johnson may have actually increased the potential for forward presence by pursuing a strategy of limited war. The experience of Vietnam led Nixon to pursue reducing overseas commitments but he did not possess the longevity of influence to see it through and the Carter administration increased the focus in the Middle East. After more than 30 years of the Cold War, President Reagan set in motion the end of the war and the transition to solidifying forward presence as a necessity for ensuring U.S. security. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait quite possibly could have been the impetus, much like North Korea's invading the South, which solidified the concept of potential threats for the future. By the end of President Clinton's term and into President Bush' administration, forward presence seemed implicit in subsequent national security strategies.

Although articulated objectives of the national security strategies changed over time, preference ranking for forward military presence remained relatively unchanged from the Cold War to post-Cold War period. As objects of analysis, the presidential doctrines and national security strategies spanning the two periods described different threats to national security. However, the preference ranking for forward military presence remained constant enough to warrant maintaining at least one-fifth of U.S. military overseas. The threats between the two periods were framed in such a way that the role and efficacy of forward military presence

seemed to be a unique strategic preference for countering each of the threats. In reality, it was just a continuation of the same belief that forward military presence is essential to national security. If so, then this belief is the essence of a strategic culture within the U.S. that guides the strategic behavior of policy makers to continually rank forward military presence as a necessary measure for ensuring national security and to potentially overlook other strategic preferences.

Based upon the concept that forward military presence stems from a U.S. strategic culture, one could predict the strategic behavior of policy-makers for decisions pertaining to future U.S. forward military presence. The complexity of the world is increasing with trends in globalization, information technology and international interactions that blur the distinction of sovereign borders. As new policy-makers such as presidents, secretaries of defense or state, congressional members and advisors to these policy-makers, enter into the decision-making body of the U.S. government, they will find it increasingly difficult to comprehend the complexity of the growing international threats to U.S. security. Therefore, they will seek answers to security questions, which will be equally evasive. Depending upon their historical experiences or understanding of history, they may find it difficult to assess the risks of the current environment. Likewise, any attempt to decrease forward presence will cause conflict and anxiety because it questions the basic underlying assumption that forward presence is required to ensure influence and leverage in international affairs for the pursuit of security in the United States. Seeking cognitive stability in this complex environment and on a topic that probably carries emotional appeal, policy makers will find comfort in the status quo of culture.

With the thought of a strategic culture that persists in the U.S. and favors continued forward military presence and makes other options inconceivable, there are seven considerations for policy-makers to keep in mind when debating future forward military presence that range from pursuit of forward presence alternatives, to misperceptions of U.S. intentions and restrictions to operational capabilities. Each of these considerations merit further research beyond the scope of this paper.

The first three considerations deal with the pursuit of technologies to reduce forward presence or counter those that seek to deny access to forward locations. First, the influence of strategic culture could frame the debate such that alternatives to reducing forward military presence, such as increased diplomatic, economic and informational measures, are overlooked or seen as less valuable when compared to military presence. Second, there might be a propensity for not pursuing or acquiring technology or alternative military force structures that would allow for a reduction in physical land presence. Examples include increased intelligence

and surveillance technology, forces that are lighter, more flexible and more rapidly deployable or forces that maintain a persistent, yet distant presence, as in the U.S. Navy. Third, even with forward presence, the U.S. must still invest in overcoming anti-access possibilities since potential adversaries will likely pursue anti-access or area denial strategies to counter U.S. access to their territory and blunt U.S. power-projection.[62]

The fourth consideration is other states or non-state actors who do not completely understand the U.S. strategic culture, might interpret U.S. forward presence as more imperialistic rather than security driven. It is imperative that the U.S. effectively convey a clear strategic communication message as to the need for presence. This leads to the fifth consideration, that U.S. forward presence might actually incite conflict because of perceived U.S. interference in non-U.S. related issues. The very presence of the U.S. might cause conflict that would not have otherwise occurred and in which no U.S. national interest is threatened.

Sixth, even though the U.S. may have security agreements with other nations, these host nations may not always allow forces to act in the best interest of the U.S. or as the military would like to operate if that nation does not have a vested interest in U.S. military action. This came to fruition when Turkey did not allow the U.S. to stage a northern front from their territory during the 2003 invasion of Iraq. A final consideration is the strain placed upon the military and the nation to find the right balance between maintaining a large all-volunteer active-duty military force that is required for global presence, in addition to having an appropriate reserve force in the United States.

Because of the static nature of organizational culture, there is little chance of U.S. forward military presence significantly changing in the near future unless some wildcard scenario occurs. In this wildcard scenario, continued forward presence might become too difficult or overwhelming for the U.S. to bear amidst growing international pressure or U.S. populace insistence for reduced military expenditures. Likewise, current U.S. allies may become more self-reliant and no longer need U.S. assistance for security. Alternatively, regional stability could increase such that risks to U.S. security no longer necessitate forward presence. Though none of these scenarios are beyond the realm of possibility, as the term wildcard suggests, they are not readily conceivable or comprehendible. The closest thing to a wildcard event in recent history was the attacks on the U.S. in September of 2001, which only served to increase the insistence for forward presence. In any event, the belief would still remain that the U.S. seeks influence and leverage via military presence.

Conclusion

Alastair Iain Johnston provides some sage advice by suggesting that one should proceed carefully when searching for a link between strategic culture and strategic behavior. Heeding this advice, the focus of this paper was more in line with earlier writers on strategic culture, which was to raise awareness of how strategic behavior might be guided by the potential existence of a strategic culture. In his final NSS, President Clinton embedded the concept of a developing U.S. strategic culture by adding a section on advancing American values and asserting that since the beginning of the U.S. democracy, the nation's policies and actions have always been guided by its core values: "political and economic freedom, respect for human rights, and the rule of law."[63] It's worth considering how these espoused values rest on an unstated underlying assumption that ultimately leads to United States forward military presence throughout the world.

Endnotes

[1] William S. Cohen, *Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, May 1997), 5.

[2] George H. W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: White House, August 1991), 3-4.

[3] William Gardner Bell et al., *American Military History, Army Historical Series* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1989), 422-542; available from http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/amh/amh-front.htm; Internet; accessed 22 February 2007.

[4] U.S. Department of Defense, "Military Personnel Historic Reports: Active Duty Military Personnel by Regional Area and by Country," available from http://siadapp.dior.whs.mil/personnel/MILITARY/history/309hist.htm; Internet; accessed 22 February 2007.

[5] Roger Cliff, Sam J. Tangredi, and Christine E. Wormuth, "The Future of U.S. Overseas Presence," in *QDR 2001: Strategy-Driven Choices for America's Security* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2001), 237.

[6] U.S. Department of Defense, "Military Personnel Historic Reports: Active Duty Military Personnel by Regional Area and by Country."

[7] W. Andrew Terrill, "Regional Fears of Western Primacy and the Future of U.S. Middle Eastern Basing Policy," December 2006; available from http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB742.pdf; Internet; accessed 16 February 2007, 14.

[8] Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability: Saudi Arabia, the Military Balance in the Gulf, and Trends in the Arab-Israeli Military Balance* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 96.

[9] Kenneth Katzman, *Bahrain: Key Issues for U.S. Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 24 March 2005), 3-4.

[10] Terrill, 9.

[11] Ibid., 14-15.

[12] Ibid., 16-17.

[13] The numbers actually overseas may be higher. The DOD personnel information does not take into account forces deployed for temporary assignment, which may come from either the United States or other overseas bases.

[14] Terrill, 24-26.

[15] U.S. Department of Defense, "Military Personnel Statistics: Active Duty Military Personnel by Service by Region/Country."

[16] Terrill, 45-46.

[17] Jeremy M. Sharp, *Qatar: Background and U.S. Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 17 March 2004), 8-9.

[18] Kenneth Katzman, *Oman: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 28 June 2005), 2-3.

[19] Kenneth Katzman, *The United Arab Emirates (UAE): Issues for U.S. Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 9 May 2005), 4-5.

[20] Kenneth Katzman, *Kuwait: Post-Saddam Issues and U.S. Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 18 May 2005), 2-3.

[21] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992), 12.

[22] Ibid., 16-26.

[23] Ibid., 22-23.

[24] Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19 (Spring 1995): 36-37.

[25] Jack L. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, September 1977), 8.

[26] Ibid., 9.

[27] Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 130-133.

[28] Colin S. Gray, "National Styles in Strategy: The American Example," *International Security* 6, no.2 (Autumn 1981): 45.

[29] Gray, *Modern Strategy*, 147.

[30] Ibid., 150.

[31] Johnston, 45-47.

[32] Ibid., 49.

[33] Ibid., 51-53.

[34] Cecil V. Crab, Jr., *The Doctrines of American Foreign Policy: Their Meaning, Role, and Future* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 107-108.

[35] S. Nelson Drew, ed. *NSC-68: Forging the Strategy of Containment* w*ith Analyses by Paul H. Nitze* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1996), 5.

[36] "NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security (April 14, 1950)," in *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68,* ed. Earnest R. May (Boston, MA: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1993), 40-41.

[37] Crab, 128.

[38] Emily S. Rosenberg, "U.S. Cultural History," in *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68,* ed. Earnest R. May (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1993), 160-163. Some disagree with Rosenberg's assessment since the document was classified until 1975 and therefore could not have impacted U.S. culture. However, Rosenberg reiterates the words of Secretary of State Dean Acheson that soon after the document was made available to select individuals, public statements originating from NSC-68 soon became the "leading embodiment of government policy."

[39] Drew, 98.

[40] Ibid., 122-124.

[41] *NSC-162/2: A Report to the National Security Council* (Washington, D.C., 30 October, 1953), available from http://www.jan.vandercrabben.name/nsc/index.php; Internet; accessed 11 March 2007, 5-11.

[42] Ibid., 22.

[43] Maxwell D. Taylor, "Flexible Response: A New National Military Program," in *American Defense Policy Third Edition*, eds. Richard G. Head and Ervin J. Rokke (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 65-66.

[44] Crab, 235-241.

[45] Ibid., 279-294.

[46] Ibid., 330.

[47] Michael L. Palmer, *Gaurdians of the Gulf: A History of America's Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1992), 106.

[48] Ronald Reagan, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, D. C.: The White House, January 1982), 4-5.

[49] Ibid., 58.

[50] Ronald Reagan, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, D. C.: The White House, January 1987), 4.

[51] Ibid., 26.

[52] Ronald Reagan, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, D. C.: The White House, January 1988), iv.

[53] George H. W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, D. C.: The White House, March 1990), 25.

[54] Terrill, 22-23.

[55] Prior to the Clinton administration, "forward presence" was primarily used to reference forces assigned overseas as a means of forward defense for the United States. In his first NSS, the term "overseas presence" was used, which gave a more permanent sense to overseas commitments.

[56] William J. Clinton, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, D. C.: The White House, July 1994), 5-8.

[57] Les Aspin, *Report on the Bottom-Up Review* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, October 1993), 8.

[58] George W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, D. C.: The White House, September 2002), 29.

[59] Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Defense, 30 September 2001), 1-11.

[60] Ibid., 25-26.

[61] Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Defense, 6 February 2006), viii.

[62] Sam J. Yangredi, "The Future Security Environment, 2001-2025: Toward a Consensus View," in *QDR 2001: Strategy-Driven Choices for America's Security*, ed. Michele A. Flournoy (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2001), 38-39.

[63] William J. Clinton, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, D. C.: The White House, December 2000), 4-5.